

House of Commons Procedures

and Economic Affairs; bills relating to railways, canals, telegraphs, canal and railway bridges, to the Committee on Transport and Communications; the bills not coming under these classes, to the Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills, and all petitions for or against the bills are considered as referred to such committee.

The Chairman: Order. When the Committee rose yesterday an amendment proposed by the hon. Member for Burnaby-Coquitlam was being considered. This amendment reads as follows:

That the proposed new Standing Order 12(1) be amended by changing the period at the end thereof to a comma, and by adding immediately thereafter the following words: "provided, however, that an appeal on a substantive motion, accompanied by the citation of authorities and precedents, may be submitted for study to a special committee to be appointed for that purpose".

[Translation]

Mr. Marcoux: Mr. Chairman, in rising to make a few remarks, it is not my intention to prolong the debate—because I have been patient enough from the very start of this discussion on the proposed changes to the parliamentary procedure—but simply to dispute the claims that the Speaker, or his representative, or the chairman of committees may have preconceived ideas or prove to be partial. Personally, I believe that the Speaker is at least as objective as any other member, be it the mover or the seconder of a motion or the one who speaks in support of, or against, that motion. That is why I dissociate myself from those who claim that the Speaker may, more than others, prove to be partial in his rulings in this house.

Another point I wish to make is this. When members support the Speaker's decision, they do not necessarily support the amendment, the subamendment or the motion which has been introduced but only the Speaker's ruling. When we support the Speaker, it is on the basis that he was chosen not by the government or the opposition but by Parliament, to maintain order in the house. And since we trusted him when we appointed him, we should continue to trust him until he decides to give up his post.

When, at the beginning of a parliament, the Prime Minister moves the appointment of a Speaker, if the members do not agree, they may thereupon introduce a counter-proposal or else simply object to the appointment of the proposed candidate. I am convinced the Speaker would not accept his appointment without unanimous consent of the house. That is why I maintain that if we vote for a new rule forbidding members to appeal from Mr. Speaker's rulings, it is

only because we trust him; we trust him today, we shall trust him tomorrow, and we shall also trust any Speaker who will be appointed in the future, because we rely on the Speaker's good judgment and his ability to conduct the business of the house.

Yesterday, the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) said that the Speaker occupying the Chair once admitted he had made a mistake and had asked the house to appeal his ruling: such was his statement. I could immediately suggest that if the Speaker realized he has made a mistake, he only would have to ask, with unanimous consent from the house, that the house appeal his ruling. Then, should the members not be satisfied, they could unanimously allow the Speaker to act counter to clause 2 of paragraph 2 of resolution No. 15 under consideration.

Those are the remarks I wished to make, Mr. Chairman.

Before resuming my seat, I wish to point out that when it is said that the Speaker is prejudiced, the statement could be reversed and applied to the one who is appealing his ruling. In fact, whoever appeals a ruling of the Speaker often is sore and disappointed because he has not drafted his motion in such a way that it be in order, and then, from that grudge, if one may say so, he rises and appeals the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Chairman, in my opinion, granting a member or a group of members the right to appeal a ruling of the Speaker on a question of personal feelings would not be more justifiable than allowing any doubt about the impartiality of the Chair.

There is another minor argument which I wished to put forward and which nearly slipped my mind. Someone criticized the rulings of the Speaker, pointing out that quite often, he did not trust in his own capacities but depended on the advice given him by the officers of the House. I must most humbly say that, in my opinion, the officers of the House are most competent to give the necessary information to the Speaker. In my opinion, their duty is simply to find faster than the Speaker, the reasons on which the latter could base his ruling if he had time to look for the necessary arguments. It seems to me that the officers of the House, who have a thorough knowledge of the procedure, and who are able to find speedily the arguments which the Speaker needs to make his ruling, are simply assisting the Speaker.